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MONTACUTE—"AND YOUR'S, MY FRIENDS"

"MONTACUTE is a sweetly retired neighbourhood; the voice of the cuckoo may still be heard here." Thus ends an account of this structure, which is in Somersetshire, some four miles from Yeovil, and one of the grandest specimens of the architecture of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the ground plan of the mansion being in the form of the letter E, a frequent conceit in those days and supposed to have been intended as a mark of respect to the Queen. As stated in the description opposite the picture of Montacute, that part of the western front, with its accompanying screen, is of earlier date than the rest of the edifice, having been removed from Clifton House near Yeovil, and rebuilt, and it is a rare and notable example of that admixture of the Italian and Gothic styles found in buildings of the reign of Henry VIII.

Above the door, in the porch, is an inscription, in ancient letters, and couched in the generous spirit of old English hospitality:

"And your's, my friends."

Over the door, on the eastern side, is inscribed the couplet:

"Through this wide op'ning gate
None come too early, none return too late."

Of the interior of Montacute, the library has a good ceiling, and some old stained glass armorial bearings in its windows.

At one end of the hall of the mansion is a very curious and bold delineation in stone of the obsolete custom of stang-riding; or riding the skimmington, or skimming, a mode of punishing certain delinquencies, or of ridiculing a

man who suffers his better half to thrash him. The punishment consisted in mounting the man upon a wooden horse, and then carrying him in procession, with sundry noisy accompaniments. In the bas-relief at Montacute one end represents an interior where the good-man, having visited the beer-barrel, has accidentally pulled out the spiggot and been forced to thrust his finger into the hole to prevent the beer running out. In this act he has been caught by his wife, who is giving him a thrashing from which he cannot escape without letting the beer run to waste. At the other end of the stucco-work is the mock procession in ridicule of him.

Montacute is the seat of the Philips family, whose successive ownership is recorded in a chapel inscription from 1588 to 1834. In the hall hangs an original portrait of Thomas Philips, the date upon the portrait being 1560. There is likewise a fine portrait by Van Dyck of Sir Robert Philips, represented as holding the petition that formed the ground for the impeachment of the Lord Chancellor, Sir Francis Bacon. Another picture is a portrait of King James I, "with the canny look of royal Jamie well expressed."

The name Montacute is derived from a conical hall not far from the mansion and on a wooded height from where is a fine view of the vale of Somerset and the British Channel.

Regarding Waterstone, Dorsetshire, and Westwood, Worcestershire, enough appears to have been said in the descriptions opposite the pictures.



WESTWOOD, WORCESTERSHIRE

Ancient Seat of the Packington Family

WESTWOOD, a vast and interesting pile, about a mile-and-a-half from the town of Droitwich, was built in the reign of Henry VIII. In spite of additions subsequently made to its exterior, its ancient character has undergone no material alteration and it remains a fine example of a Tudor country-seat. It has continued in the Packington family since its first erection. A star and sheaf, the armorial bearings of the family, appear in every part of the external decoration of the mansion.

The sketch represents an old gate-house. Like the mansion, one corner of which is visible in the background to the left, the gate-house is built of red brick with stone tracings, and tiled. The turret is of timber, slated. This gate-house stands at the end of a long avenue leading from Droitwich through a noble park. Here grow some good oak trees, and there is a lake. The perspective in the sketch shows that through the gate-house one enters a huge court, traversing perhaps some four or five hundred feet from the gate-house to the mansion.

BATTLEMENT GARDEN, BELVOIR CASTLE
Duchess of Rutland

POSSIBLY no better idea of the many unusual garden sites to which the surroundings of old English homes lend themselves, can be given than by this picture of a battlement garden at Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Duke of Rutland. There are three terrace gardens on the battlements of the castle. The one shown in Miss Carlisle's painting is the personal garden of the Duchess of Rutland, who is very fond of rosemary and herbaceous plants. From this battlement garden there is a view of the country for miles around, while a beautiful background is formed by the green of climbing plants on wall and turrets.

